

WASHINGTON STATE VETERANS EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (VERG) CHARTER

2015-2016 General (Charter) Agencies

General Committee Member Agencies

- Attorney General's Office (**ATG**)
- Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (**BIIA**)
- Department of Agriculture (**AGR**)
- Department of Commerce (**COM**)
- Department of Corrections (**DOC**)
- Department of Ecology (**ECY**)
- Employment Security Department (**ESD**)
- Department of Enterprise Services (**DES**)
- Department of Financial Institutions (**DFI**)
- Department of Fish and Wildlife (**DFW**)
- Department of Health (**DOH**)
- Department of Labor and Industries (**L&I**)
- Department of Licensing (**DOL**)
- Department of Natural Resources (**DNR**)
- Department of Retirement Systems (**DRS**)
- Department of Revenue (**DOR**)
- Department of Social and Health Services (**DSHS**)
- Department of Veteran Affairs (**DVA**)
- Employment Security Department (**ESD**)
- Health Care Authority (**HCA**)
- Liquor and Cannabis Board (**LCB**)
- Office of Administrative Hearings (**OAH**)
- Office of Financial Management-State HR (**OFM/SHR**)
- Parks and Recreation Commission (**PARKS**)
- Recreation and Conservation Office (**RCO**)
- Washington Lottery (**LOT**)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (**WSDOT**)
- Washington State Military Department (**MIL**)
- Utilities and Transportation Commission (**UTC**)
- Washington State Patrol (**WSP**)
- Washington State School for the Blind (**WSSB**)
- Washington Student Achievement Council (**WSAC**)

Executive Board

Chair: Lonnie Spikes (**DOL**)
Co-Chair: Jennifer McDaniel (**LOT**)
Secretary: Ashley Harris (**OAH**)
Executive Sponsor: Mary Forbes (**DVA**)
Past Chair: Cat Nichols (**DVA**)

Background

The Washington State Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG) was formed in 2012 as a resource for making state government an employer of choice for Veterans by recommending and developing strategies with the state employees' veteran community. The Office of Financial Management-State Human Resources Division will provide guidance and support to help the VERG succeed.

Purpose

The VERG exists to help integrate the experience, values, and knowledge of both veterans and service members in state employment. The VERG shall provide advice and assistance to state agencies on veteran recruitment, retention, and development strategies in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 13-01. The VERG assists state agencies in support of existing state employees who have served as members of the armed forces through recognition, resource identification, and mentorship.

Goals

- Recruit veterans to state service through outreach and educational activities.
- Retain veterans by providing a support structure, education, and career progression assistance.
- Recognize veterans by planning annual activities that honor their military and state service.

The VERG is governed by a set of By-Laws that outlines the group's membership, operational processes, and scope of activities. The VERG does not act as an alternative employment mechanism for addressing employee grievances and operates in alignment with all related bargaining agreements, rules, and laws.

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I. Membership

A. The VERG membership is open to state employees who are interested in promoting the values of veterans, the principles, and activities of the VERG. Prior military service is not a requirement of membership.

B. Executive Board

1. Chair

The Chair is the person who served as the previous years' Co-Chair. The Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Past Chair.

2. Co-Chair

The General Committee elects the Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will serve a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.

3. Secretary

The General Committee elects the Secretary. The Secretary will serve a one-year term. Additional terms may be consecutive.

4. Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor is a non-elected position. The Executive Sponsor is currently appointed by OFM State Human Resources.

5. Past Chair

The position of Past Chair is served by the Chair of the previous term.

C. General Committee/Members – Agency Representatives

1. The General Committee members are state employees that have been selected by their agencies.
2. Charter agencies will renew their list of representatives by providing the Secretary a confirmation of their representatives before July 31st of each year.
3. Charter agencies will provide one primary and one alternate employee to serve on the General Committee. Other employees are encouraged to participate in VERG activities as a member of the Veteran Community at Large.
4. Charter agencies will be asked to provide replacement representatives when their appointed representative cannot continue with the VERG for their appointment period.

D. Veteran Community at Large

1. Veteran Community at Large members are individuals interested in promoting the values of veterans, the principles, and activities of the VERG.
2. A Veteran Community at Large member is strongly encouraged to participate in all VERG activities.

E. Removal of General Committee Members

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1. Members may be removed from the VERG by a majority vote of the Executive Board or their host state agency.
2. If the Executive Board removes a member, the Chair will provide the host state agency a full reasoning for the removal.

II. Roles

A. Executive Board Officers

1. Chair
 - a) Acts as the lead facilitator for all meetings of the Executive Board and General Committee.
 - b) Acts as a representative of the VERG to the Executive Sponsor, agency leadership, and others as needed.
 - c) Invites state agencies or other guests to VERG meetings and activities to provide information on veterans benefits, entitlements, or other information.
 - d) Serves a one-year term and then moves to the Past Chair position.
2. Co-Chair
 - a) Assumes the role of Chair in their absence.
 - b) May sit as an ad-hoc member on all subcommittees.
 - c) Serves as the lead to the Charter and By-Laws subcommittee.
 - d) Serves a one-year term before moving to the position of Chair.
3. Secretary
 - a) Maintains all meeting notes and documentation related to the VERG.
 - b) Schedules meeting space and disseminates information related to the VERG.
 - c) Maintains membership and attendance rosters.
 - d) Receives input from subcommittee leads, the Executive Board and the Executive Sponsor regarding the Activities Plan and compiles the final document to be incorporated into the By-Laws.
 - e) Serves a one-year term, additional terms may be consecutive.
4. Past Chair
 - a) Assists the current Chair as needed.
 - b) Provide continuity in the leadership and direction of the VERG.
 - c) Facilitates the election of officers by accepting nominations, preparing all ballots, and providing oversight of the election process.
 - d) Serves a one-year term.

B. General Committee

1. The General Committee consists of state employees selected by and assigned to represent their agencies as members of the VERG. It is expected that these members will:
 - a) Attend all VERG general meetings.

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- b) Participate in VERG activities.
- c) Report back to their individual agencies on the work of the VERG.
2. Members of the General Committee must serve in at least one subcommittee.
3. Costs related to the Committees' role and actions relating to the VERG are covered by the individual's agency. This may include agency-approved travel, staff time, use of state resources, or other costs.
4. VERG members will adhere to all applicable state rules, regulations, and policies at all VERG activities and events.

C. Veteran Community at Large

1. These members may, or may not be, state employees.
2. These members will follow the guidelines applicable to state employees as established by state rules, regulations, and policies.
3. Veteran Community at Large members are non-voting members.
4. Must be interested in promoting the values of veterans and willing to participate in the activities of the VERG.
5. All costs relating to membership at this level are absorbed by the individual.

III. Standing Committees

A. Charter and By-Laws

1. This committee establishes and reviews the Charter and By-Laws of the VERG.
2. A review of the Charter and By-Laws will be conducted beginning in the month of June by the Charter and By-Laws subcommittee.
3. Convenes as needed to review, update, or modify the Charter and By-Laws.
4. Presents a report on changes or modifications to the VERG during the August meeting for review and approval.
5. The Co-Chair acts as the lead to this committee.

B. Career Development

1. Mobilizes VERG members and initiatives to assist state agencies in their efforts to recruit, mentor, and promote veterans within state service.
2. Partners with local veteran related organizations that refer veterans to state employment.

C. Recognition and Employment Support

1. Acts as a focal point in state agencies to recognize, value the contributions, and honor veterans within state service.
2. Supports the planning and hosting of state agency-funded veteran recognition events for Veterans and Memorial Days.

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3. Assists in developing information to state employees who are veterans, or spouses of veterans or members of the Reserves/National Guard, on their benefits and entitlements.

D. Marketing and Communication

1. Work closely with the communications community to produce press releases for events (to announce in advance or after an event).
2. Maintain a list of media contacts and proactively reach out to various media entities for coming events.
3. Develop news stories for the VERG quarterly newsletter and write and submit articles on a timely basis.
4. Obtain photos from external media entities to be integrated into the newsletter.
5. Continuously update the VERG's website and social networking sites to reach a broad audience of potential volunteers, employees and the veteran community at large. Post news, event reminders and success stories and upload pictures, photos, and compelling stories to spike user interest, feedback, and participation.
6. Acts as a conduit for inquiries and questions about veteran issues to organizations that support veterans.
7. Works with VERG members and Officers to prepare an annual report on VERG activities to be presented during the August Annual Meeting.

IV. Nominations and Elections

A. Elected Officers are:

1. Chair
2. Co-Chair
3. Secretary

B. During the month of May, any current General Committee member may submit nominations for the elected officer positions to the Past Chair.

C. The Past Chair will conduct the elections of officers prior to June 30th of each year.

D. Written or electronic ballots will be used, but secret ballots are not allowed. A majority vote of the General Committee will determine the Elected Officers. Ties will be broken by a coin flip.

E. The Elected Officers terms are from July 1 – June 30.

F. The Executive Board may appoint a member of the General Committee into a

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vacant Elected Officer position in times of unexpected vacancies subject to the approval of the General Committee.

V. Executive Sponsor

- A. Provides executive level guidance to members of the VERG.
- B. Acts as a champion for activities supported by the VERG by collaborating with state agencies leadership to foster their engagement and commitments of support.
- C. Assists the VERG to identify and capitalize on available resources to complete the VERG Action Plan and activities.

VI. Supporting Agencies

- A. Agencies that offer direct services to state employees and are in alignment with the VERG Charter and Activities Plan may be called upon to provide assistance, information, and services. These include, but are not limited to the following:
 - 1. Department of Enterprise Services (provides personnel action support for such services as recruitment and staff training)
 - 2. Department of Veteran Affairs (connects veterans to earned benefits and entitlements)
 - 3. Employment Security Department (provides employment and training services to employers and job seekers)
 - 4. OFM State Human Resources (provides human resource services to agencies and state employees)
- B. Supporting Agencies may enter into agreements with other organizations to provide support and assistance to the VERG, including entering into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) or contracts when appropriate.

VII. Meetings

- A. General Committee
 - 1. Meetings will be held from 9-noon on the fourth Thursday of the following months:
 - a) January
 - b) February
 - c) March
 - d) April
 - e) May
 - f) August
 - g) September

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- h) October
- 2. In the month of August, an Annual Meeting of the VERG will be held. Items on the agenda for this meeting will include:
 - a) Presentation of the Annual Report.
 - b) An update report by the Charter and By-Laws Committee.
 - c) Confirm and orient new agency representatives to the General Committee.
 - d) All VERG business will be conducted in an open and transparent manner that is expected of all public servants.

B. Subcommittees

- 1. Time will be allotted for sub-committees to meet during the VERG General Meeting, however, all standing subcommittees should meet independent from the General Committee meetings on a regular basis if possible to ensure completion of all initiatives and work activities identified in the Activities Plan.

VIII. Activities Plan

- A. Each year, the VERG Secretary will work with the leads for the subcommittees, the Executive Board, and the Executive Sponsor in generating an Activities Plan. The plan will include the following:
 - 1. A list of planned activities in support of the Charter and By-Laws to include the focus of each subcommittee.
 - 2. Methods to measure the success and/or performance of each activity.
 - 3. Measureable goals that will be tracked and reported in the Annual Report.
- B. The Activities Plan will be approved by the General Committee during the August meeting.
- C. The current Activities Plan shall be a part of the VERG By-Laws and shall be incorporated into the By-Laws by reference at the time it is approved.

IX. Staffing/Operational Costs

- A. Costs for all VERG activities will be absorbed by the supporting agencies.
- B. Costs may include, but are not limited to de minimis use of state resources, as approved by each executive committee member's agencies, to include:
 - 1. Email
 - 2. Meeting Rooms
 - 3. Transportation
 - 4. Presentation or Handout Materials
 - 5. Staff resource time

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- C. Support for other VERG activities such as data collection, hosting a VERG information web site, records storage, or other costs may be funded by the supporting agencies.

X. Dissolution

- A. Should the VERG become dissolved and no longer a functioning entity any resources or products will be turned over to an appropriate state agency or veterans support group in accordance with applicable WAC, RCW, and policies.

